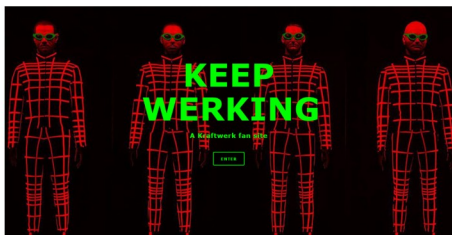


AKTIVITÄT

UNOFFICIAL KRAFTWERK FANZINE ■ ISSUE 10



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A K T I V I T Ä T

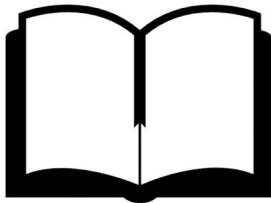
K R A F T W E R K F A N Z I N E

This document contains the scanned pages of one of the Kraftwerk Aktivität Fanzines or complimentary publications that were produced from 1992 through to 1998.

During this time 10 Fanzines were published along with various update issues and other complimentary publications.

The scans have only been altered for clarity, with the exception of addresses and phone numbers that have now been blocked out. So please note that all errors and miss-information are as they appeared at the time of publication. Later issues tried to address the earlier problems as the production team put more stringent editorial practices in place.

Best viewed with two pages side-by-side



ACTIVITY

AKTIVITÄT

ISSUE N° 10
APRIL 1998

ACTIVITY	1
KRAFTWERK'S LATEST LIVE WORK	3
COLLECTORS CORNER - JAPAN	5
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE	13
KLING KLANG	16
- THE ELECTRONIC GARDEN	
KLING KLANG v. 1992	20
1998 TERMINE (THE TOUR DATES) 24	
IMAGES	25
MICHAEL ROTHER	27
- FACE OUT INTERVIEW	
YAMO AT KLEMDAG 1997	34
QUESTIONS/ANSWERS 3	36
SMALL ADS	37
OUTRO	38
ITALIA 1990 IMAGES	40

FRONT COVER: RALF HÜTTER
PICTURED DURING 'MUSIKON STOP',
TRIBAL GATHERING 1997, WEARING
THE NEW ONSTAGE OUTFIT.
WITH THANKS TO EMILIO
GIARETTA, ITALY, FOR THE
PHOTOGRAPH.

KRAFTWERK 1998 TOUR DATES IN ENGLAND, USA, JAPAN, SPAIN AND DENMARK.

Following on from 1997's concerts in England, Austria and Germany, Kraftwerk will be playing live again in June of this year and a series of world tour dates in various countries have now been announced. The dates, in Japan, USA, Spain and Denmark thus far, as listed by MCT (Kraftwerk's official promoters) on their web pages (<http://www.tickets.de>) are reproduced in full on page 24 of this issue. More recently, Kraftwerk's rumoured appearance at the 'Machines' festival on London's South Bank has been reported in the NME of 11th April with the following news item;

"KRAFTWERK are confirmed to play two shows at the London Royal Festival Hall on October 4 and 5. The gigs look likely to be their only appearances in the UK this year and sources close to the band have told NME they will be playing two sets featuring music recorded before 1974's 'Autobahn' album. It would be the only time they've played pre-'Autobahn' material live in this country. Each set will be three to four hours long.

Kraftwerk recorded three albums before 'Autobahn'. They were 'Kraftwerk' (or 'Highrail'), 'Kraftwerk 2' and 'Ralf And Florian' and were radically different from the structured formalism and electronic beats the band have become widely known for.

Kraftwerk's performance is part of a celebration of electronic music on the South Bank being organised under the working title of 'Machines'. Cabaret Voltaire and BEF are among electronica forerunners expected to appear.

Meanwhile, confusion still surrounds the release of any new Kraftwerk music. The band's UK agent says there is no release planned for this year while German sources claim tapes have already been delivered to the band's German label. A German source has told NME that Kraftwerk's Ralf Hütter delivered music to EMI's Düsseldorf office a month ago. "When the MD got back from lunch his secretary told him that a really rude cycle courier had stormed into the office with his bike over one shoulder and slammed a bag of tapes on to her desk. "When the MD looked in the bag he found out that it contained tapes of new Kraftwerk music."

AKTIVITÄT IS AN UNOFFICIAL FANZINE PROVIDING NEWS ON THE OUTPUT OF KRAFTWERK AND RELATED ARTISTS. PRODUCED BY FANS, FOR FANS. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED WITHIN EACH ARTICLE ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE EDITOR. THE ARTICLES AND PHOTOS / IMAGES ARE COPYRIGHT TO EACH INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR AND MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED FOR UNFAIR GAIN WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE COPYRIGHT HOLDER.

Kraftwerk's date in Washington DC is part of the third annual 'Tibetan Freedom Concert', a two day event on both the 13th and 14th of June at the RFK Stadium. Kraftwerk are but one of a number of acts that will appear; Pearl Jam, A Tribe Called Quest, Beastie Boys, Beck, Blues Traveler, Chaksam-Pa, Tracy Chapman, Wyclef Jean, Kraftwerk, Sean Lennon, Radiohead, REM, Sonic Youth - with more acts to be added in time. Organised by the Milarepa Fund, official information web pages (<http://www.milarepa.org/wwwchat/index.html>) describe the Kraftwerk appearance as 'a momentous reunion show from German electronic music forerunners Kraftwerk'! Meanwhile, the web pages publicising the 'Sonar' festival in Spain (<http://www.sonar.es/s98/english/programa/avanc.htm>) also reveal that as well as Kraftwerk, Mouse on Mars will also appear, as well as Francois Kevorkian on the DJ front. As I write this, two of the Tokyo concerts are already sold out, with a third added due to demand, presumably.

KRAFTWERK INTERNATIONAL DISCOGRAPHY V.2 ONLINE

Probably the most extensive and complete discography of Kraftwerk material you will find is online at the following URL, for those with Internet access; <http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Lounge/3713/discogra.html> In fact, the discography has been online for quite some time, but it has been seriously revamped and improved upon with the addition of scans of rare picture sleeves now added. The data for this discography has been compiled principally by Gunther Pöcker as well as from information supplied by Klaus Zäpke, Frank Köberlein, Jose Garcia and Ian Calder.

NEW BOOTLEGS

A new double bootleg CD by the name of 'Dynamo Deutschland' is now available, featuring the following tracklisting, culled from already existing Kraftwerk bootlegs;

CD 1: Birmingham, Hummingbird, 15.07.1991; Intro, Numbers, Computerworld, It's more fun to compute - Homecomputer, Computer Love, The Model, Tour de France, Autobahn, Radioactivity, Trans-Europe Express, Pocket Calculator

CD 2: Birmingham, Hummingbird, 15.07.1991 (continued); The Robots, Musique Non Stop - Utrecht, Vredenburg, 10.12.1981; Nummern/Computerwelt, Metropolis, Das Modell, Computerliebe, Taschenrechner/Pocket Calculator, Radioaktivität - Bristol, Locarno, 1981; Neon Lights, The Hall of Mirrors, Showroom Dummies - 'Special Bonus Track'; Mini Calcateur (LP version).

Another Kraftwerk bootleg CD which is reported as due for release later in April is called 'Concert Classics', featuring 'a 40 minute live recording from 1975 including 'Autobahn' and more' - so, is most likely another re-issue, of the 1975 Cologne radio recording.

KRAFTWERK WEBSITE UPDATE

Kraftwerk's website was updated recently to include links regarding their new live dates (including a little Java applet with their own unique little world globe!) as well as a link which gives the opportunity to order official Kraftwerk merchandise - Kling Klang Konsum Produkt GmbH - on offer are the cycling shirts/t-shirts that were on sale at last years concerts. ■

Kraftwerk's latest live work...

The main points of interest from the recent Linz and Karlsruhe live concerts.

1997 will be recalled as the year that Kraftwerk's chips were re-activated – not only did the band return to live performance for the first time in four years, but they saw fit to air new material in concert too. The band's appearance on May 24 at 1997's large-scale 'Tribal Gathering' event in Luton Hoo, England, was anticipated by many to be the only activity of the year by the band and certainly there were noises to such effect in media reports to coincide with the summer event. However, there had been one or two rumours to the effect that Kraftwerk were to perform at the opening of a new Multimedia centre in Karlsruhe, Germany in October and this, unlike most Kraftwerk rumours, did indeed come to pass. Saturday October 18 saw the opening of the ZKM ('Zentrum für Kunst und Multimedia') in Karlsruhe. The band's participation at the ZKM was part of the three-week 'Multimediale 5' event. Anticipation for the event was such that tickets were sold out by the beginning of September. As a warm-up, no doubt, Kraftwerk also announced a date for two days prior to this event, in Linz, Austria.

As well as Kraftwerk's performance at the ZKM there were sets from DJs before (DJ Xenia, from Moscow) and after (Laurent Garnier) the band's live set. Security at the ZKM show was very strict and the audience had to endure quite some time queuing outside the concert hall while the arduous task of searching entrants to the hall took place. Consequently, Kraftwerk did not take to the stage until much later than the originally scheduled start time.

Both shows saw Kraftwerk perform the same set-list. Effectively, one can see the Linz show as being a practice run for the arguably more high-profile ZKM opening. As it turns out, the practice was perhaps much-needed since there were a number of 'technical hitches' that befell both performances! With the 'Tribal Gathering' show we were all somewhat stunned by the fact that Kraftwerk chose to perform a brand new song as part of their set. Well, even more surprises were in store for the audiences of these two performances, lucky blighters! To begin with, Kraftwerk have added an updated rendition of 'Airwaves' ('Ätherwellen') to their set - on these occasions however the song is bereft of its motorik rhythm and takes on an air of undoubted ambience, akin perhaps to the elongated intro to the live version of 'Tour de France'. The trademark Kraftwerk vocoder voices are present and correct and it is these electronic tongues that mouth the songs familiar lyric, rather than Ralf's human tones.

Following on from this surprise was the first of the new songs -- an eight minute plus slice of sequenced Kraftwerk. The nearest I can think of describe it to is perhaps like 'The Mix' version of 'Home Computer' with perhaps a dash of 'TEE' and 'Metropolis' in the melody department. In all, it has a rather dark, uneasy vibe to its patterns and melodies. Certainly in the same eerily unsettling frame as 'Home Computer' and 'It's More Fun to Compute', if you see what I mean...

Following on a couple of tracks later came the second of the brand new songs. This one has a much funkier feel to it, very dance-music influenced without doubt – Kraftwerk in 'house' mode. Set

against a tricky sequenced refrain, a heavy four-from-the-floor backbeat pins down the proceedings for a typically Kraftwerkian melody to sit atop. Later on some vintage Kraftwerk vocoder touches are introduced, which have such echoes of the 'Radio-Aktivität' LP stamped all over them. In terms of the sounds, this like the previous track (and 'Airwaves' come to that) seems to utilise a bank of sounds that are no stranger to other Kraftwerk live performances. In all, I'd describe the new tracks as almost as if they were some kind of continuation of 'The Mix'.

The third new track is of course the same one as first premiered at the 'Tribal Gathering' event, though sounding different, further revisions having been completed. Like the first of the new tracks, it has an uneasy tone to much of it, again a darker sounding piece. For this track (and the following 'Music Non Stop') Kraftwerk once again donned the UV-lit 'wire-frame' effect costumes and dark glasses.

Essentially, the set-list was the same as that from 'Tribal Gathering' but with the addition of 'Airwaves' and the two other brand new songs. The complete set-list for both the ZKM and Linz gigs is reproduced here;

'Nummern', 'Computerwelt', 'Heimcomputer', 'The Man Machine', 'Tour de France', 'Autobahn', 'Ätherwellen', 'Unreleased Song 1', 'Sellafield 2' - 'Radioaktivität', 'Unreleased Song 2', 'Trans Europa Express-Abzug - Metall auf Metall', 'Taschenrechner', 'Die Roboter/Robotronik', 'Unreleased Song 3' (first performed at 'Tribal Gathering'), 'Music Non Stop'

It's also noted that Kraftwerk used a quadrophonic speaker system in Karlsruhe for '3D' sound effects during some of the songs. (This was only in Karlsruhe, not in Linz.) They also used two additional large video screens on each side of the stage (as was also seen at 'Tribal Gathering') in Karlsruhe. Whether this speaker system was part of the problem is not certain but many members of the audience have noted that the sound quality for the show was poor, the acoustics of the concert hall being far from ideal. Coupled with mechanical failure also causing problems (with the bands robots and video screens at the two shows, vocals at Karlsruhe were also affected with feedback from the equipment), all in all, it seems unlikely that Kraftwerk could be particularly happy with these live performances, bearing in mind their normally perfectionist nature...

Even more... Kraftwerk performed a further two previously unreleased songs at the soundcheck for the Karlsruhe concert, bringing the total number of new tracks performed this year to five. The tracklisting for the Karlsruhe soundcheck is reported as:

'Nummern', 'Computerwelt', 'Heimcomputer', 'Die Mensch Maschine', 'Completely New Song 1', 'Autobahn', 'Completely New Song 2', 'Radioactivity', 'Second new song from the concert.'

NB; at the soundcheck only portions of the songs were performed, not the complete numbers.

With the recent confirmation that Kraftwerk will be performing live again this year with several dates in America, Japan and Denmark at very least, anticipation of what new material may await these performances will doubtless grow.

IAC

Collectors Corner — Japan

A round up of the Japanese Kraftwerk collectables by IAC

Japan has proved to be one of the most collectable markets for Kraftwerk rarities — and this is easily reflected in the high prices commanded for releases from this territory. The primary appeal for collectors is no doubt the novelty of some of the releases — the 7" singles for example come packaged in a unique fashion in comparison to other territories, with their clear plastic poly bags, full colour glossy paper inserts and high-quality vinyl pressings. Sleeve design for the singles in particular are often extremely different from the norm, another tempting feature. The albums also tend to benefit from extra packaging — as well as nice, thick quality card for the covers there tends to be extra inserts with reprints (often highly inaccurate!) of the song lyrics and extra Japanese text and photos too more often than not.

To understand quite why Kraftwerk's releases from Japan command such high prices it's worth noting that the actual amounts of these items in circulation are relatively small — the Japanese record market, while large, is primarily dominated by home-grown artists. An act such as Kraftwerk does not generate a vast number of sales — additionally, Japanese releases are often some months behind other territories releases of the same title, which allows imported copies to saturate the market and diminish the demand from the home shores. This leads to an additional complication, since Japanese collectors themselves seem keen to track down these home-grown releases that were neglected first time round — other than Kraftwerk, you will find new wave acts (for example, The Strangers, Siouxsie and The Banshees, etc) where prices asked for Japanese releases are pretty extreme, particularly for 7" singles.

SINGLES

Kraftwerk's 7" releases from Japan are very keenly collected items and the earliest examples are extremely scarce and command high prices on the relatively infrequent occasions that they appear for sale. 'Autobahn' was the first such single ('Autobahn' (Edit) (3.28) / Morgenspaziergang (4.02), Vertigo, SFL-2023 [1975]). Like all of the subsequent 7" singles, this item comes packaged as follows; the record itself comes in a standard company record sleeve — this then comes housed in a thin clear plastic sleeve and an additional colour picture sleeve printed on thin, glossy paper is included. It is this unusual style of packaging that no doubt appeals to collectors, i.e. the fact that it is by no means a 'normal' picture sleeve. The 'Autobahn' sleeve features the painting that graces most of the LP releases covers, i.e. the 'motorway painting' as depicted by Emil Schult. In addition, there are large Japanese text/graphics printed on the front. The rear side of the picture insert includes Japanese text and a small reproduction of the LP cover design, in black and white. Get used to the idea — all of the Kraftwerk Japanese 7" singles follow the theme of colour picture on the front and black and white reverse. This is an extremely scarce single — copies are very few and far between. In terms of how much you should be looking to pay to secure a copy, well... find a copy first and then worry about the cost! Seriously!

About equal in rarity value is the 'Radio-Activity' 7" single ('Radio-Activity' (Edit) (3.18)/ 'Antenna' (Edit) (3.05), Capitol, ECR 10929, [1976]). Regular and promo copies are available — though if you can find either release you will be doing very well indeed! The picture insert on this occasion is quite novel in that while using the standard LP sleeve design on the front the art department at the Japanese arm of the record company also saw fit to include Kraftwerk themselves on the front of the radio set design, cut and pasted into the circle of the radio set speaker! Like 'Autobahn', there is nothing actually unique about the music on the disc — standard edits as can be found elsewhere. Primarily it appears to be the packaging and sheer rarity of the damn things that appeal to vinyl junkies soft spots.

Japanese 7" promos are distinguishable from regular stock copies by the fact that the labels are printed in only black and white and the record company bags are also just plain white. The picture inserts also have a perforated hole to mask the price as printed on the sleeve.

Quite why I am not sure, but there does not appear to have been any single releases from the 'Trans-Europe Express' era from Japan. Strange... One is tempted to think that there must have been at least one such item, as a promo even, but as yet no such signs.

This takes us on to the 'Man Machine' era and two releases which are probably the most commonly found Japanese 7" release from Kraftwerk; these appear to have been imported quite widely and were readily available at the time from mail order shops such as Adrians in Essex. 'The Robots' is a nice item in its fairly unique sleeve layout ('The Robots' (Edit) (3.44) / 'Trans-Europe Express' (Edit) (3.54), Capitol, ECR 20476, [1978]) while 'Showroom Dummies' ('Showroom Dummies' (6.11)/ 'The Robots' (6.11), Capitol, ECR 20658, [1979]) has a fantastic sleeve design with a unique photo of Kraftwerk's mannequins on display pictured against a 'Man Machine' artwork backdrop — worth getting your feverishly sweaty fingers for this alone if you're a fan of the Kraftwerk image!

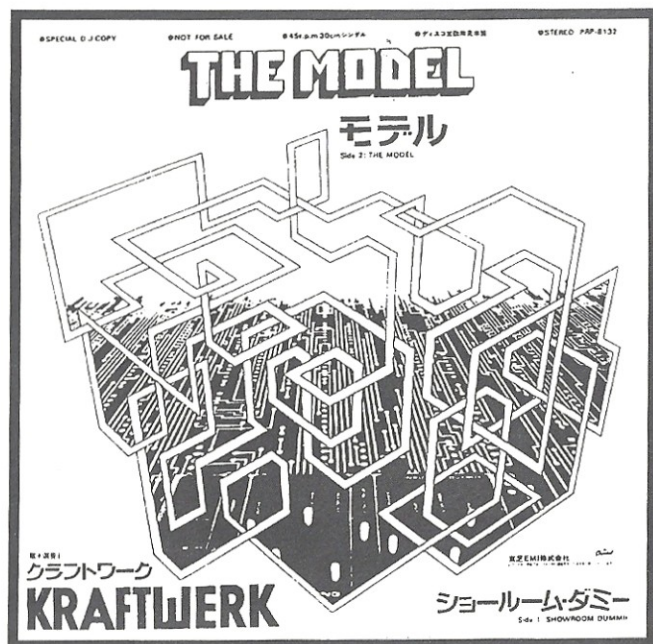
Both of these singles come with the maroon and silver coloured Capitol label design and are housed in green Toshiba-EMI company bags. The white-labelled promo copies are also available for both items. Prices for the regular copies can be seen going upwards of £30 but if your sensible and, more importantly patient, you'll find copies selling from £7 or so, which is a much more reasonable reflection of the record's true rarity. The promo copies, unsurprisingly, are scarcer and will require you to empty your pockets for upwards of £25 or so most likely.

1981's 'Pocket Calculator' is unique in that it features the specially recorded Japanese language rendition of the track on the A side ('Dentaku' (Edit) (4.34)/ 'Pocket Calculator' (Edit) (4.34), EMI/Toshiba, EMS 17145, [1981]). Not as unique as one might first think since most other countries used 'Dentaku' as the B side for their releases of 'Pocket Calculator'. Similarly, the sleeve design uses the standard design of other countries but with Japanese text/graphics — most of which can be found on the back side of picture sleeves from elsewhere. Still a nice little item however. Again, promo versions also available.

1982's UK number 1 hit status of 'The Model' saw the almost worldwide re-release of this song and Japan too followed suit ('The Model' (3.38)/ 'Computer Love' (Edit) (3.45), EMI/Toshiba, EMS 17223, [1982]).



JAPANESE DJ PROMO-ONLY 12" — 'SHOWROOM DUMMIES'/'THE MODEL'



This comes in a superb, totally different sleeve design which pictures Kraftwerk posing in front of a backdrop of various digital clocks displaying the world's time-zone differences – very desirable for this image alone. This particular 7" is much in demand and sells for much more than the three previous examples just mentioned.

Surprisingly, this appears to be the last Kraftwerk 7" Japanese release – I say surprisingly since there appears to be no release for 'Tour De France' at all, which really puzzles me, one would have expected a promo edition at very least. Sadly, no signs of such an item as yet. By 1991 and the release of 'The Mix' versions of 'The Robots' and 'Radioactivity', the humble 7" single was a dying format and in fact there appears to have been no single releases at all in Japan of either of these tracks, far less on 7" format.

Moving on to the bands 12" singles from the land of the rising sun and we get into the seriously megare-rare territory. There appear to be only three such releases, all of which are promo-only affairs. The first to appear is a Kraftwerk mega-rarity. 'Showroom Dummies' ('Showroom Dummies' (6.11) / 'The Model' (3.38), Capitol, PRP-8132, [1978]) comes packaged in a unique sleeve design like no other Kraftwerk release at all. Both sides feature a similar pattern in which there are two entirely different designs. On the 'Showroom Dummies' side there is a drawing of a simplistic robotic lady! – complete with bosom and high heels, oh yes! (see illustration). The text at the top of the sleeve states 'Special DJ Copy – Not for Sale'. Side two features 'The Model' and the sleeve design features a similar mesh of lines but with a printed circuit board design this time. Value? Difficult to say – hardly ever turns up for sale. Probably whatever you are willing to pay to secure the item if you like the look of it! Yes, that could well be over £100!

A similarly elusive item, but perhaps even more of a quirk since it features Kraftwerk on one side and Duran Duran, no less, on the other is the promo 12" for 'Dentaku' (Side one: Duran Duran: Planet Earth/Planet Earth, Side Two: Kraftwerk; Dentaku(4.55)/Pocket Calculator(4:55), Toshiba-EMI, PRP-8179, [1981]). One side of the cover features the Duran Duran design, the flip features the familiar Kraftwerk design. Again, it's a genuine rarity that is hard to come by, hence an exact value is equally elusive.

Finally in the realm of the 12" single we have 'Musique Non Stop' from 1986 (Musique Non Stop(6.16)/Musique Non Stop (Radio Edit)(4.11), Toshiba-EMI, EMS 14159, [1986]). Another promo-only 12", in picture sleeve. I don't actually own a copy, but from what I have seen in a photocopy then either the back cover has a very different layout or it may well be an additional insert sheet instead. Can anyone clarify? Rare and in demand because of that but probably not in the same league as the other two 12" singles pricewise.

There appear to be no CD singles from Japan – for some reason there were no Japanese releases of either of the 1991 singles from 'The Mix'.

ALBUMS

When it comes to packaging, the Japanese album releases have their particular appeals, perhaps just because of their look. In general, all the sleeves have tended to reproduce the familiar LP cover designs

from Europe. However, Japanese releases can normally be easily spotted by the thin, removable paper 'bänderole' title strips that wrap round on one side of the covers. Additionally, the albums quite often come complete with additional insert sheets including lyrics, text and pictures not to be found on other territories releases.

All of Kraftwerk's standard album releases have been issued on vinyl in Japan, with the exception of 'The Mix' only. Therefore, 'Kraftwerk', 'Kraftwerk 2' and 'Ralf and Florian' are available in Japanese pressings. 'Kraftwerk' (Philips, BT 8101 [1979]) comes in a single, not gatefold sleeve unlike the original German releases – though there appears to be no title strip to this release. Equally of note, it dates from 1979, obviously quite some time on from the initial release, perhaps a move to mop-up more sales in the post 'Man Machine' success. Musically, the same as the regular issues. 'Kraftwerk 2' (Philips, BT 8108 [1979]) follows the same pattern, obviously released at the same period – again, not a gatefold sleeve, no title strip either. One anomaly – the number '2' has been removed from the sleeve design!

'Ralf and Florian' (Philips, BT 8102 [1979]) is also a 1979 re-issue. A single sleeve but this time unique from other countries releases in that on the back cover it does not use the familiar photo of Ralf and Florian seated behind their instruments in the early Kling Klang studio that the other sleeves sport -- no, this instead features a lengthy biography on the band in both Japanese and English. The front of the cover uses the German sleeve design motif – i.e., the black and white portrait photo of Messrs. Hütter and Schneider. Also of note, there are promo copies of this LP available.

Most Japanese LPs are quite scarce, tending to command prices from £15 upwards, but with the three early LPs being rare in any shape or form, the prices for those are considerably higher, tending to aver towards the £50+ region more often than not.

Moving onto 'Autobahn' and we get into a multitude of releases. The original 1975 release ('Autobahn', Vertigo, RJ 7010 [1975]) sports the 'motorway painting' cover on the front and the hippy-ish band pic on the back (you know, the 'back seat of a VW Beetle' one!), but with different title graphics. The additional insert sheet that comes with this version also features some black and white live pictures of Ralf and Florian from 1973. There is also a title strip too.

There are at least two other issues that I know of; 'Autobahn' (Philips, BT-5191 [1978]) is part of a 'Rock Super Collection' series of releases from 1978. This version also comes with an additional insert sheet, but it is a different one to the original release, though the sleeves design seems to be exactly the same. Once again, complete with a title strip. The other re-issue ('Autobahn', Philips, BT 8103 [1979]) is obviously from the same re-issue period, judging by the catalogue number, as the 'Kraftwerk', 'Kraftwerk 2' and 'Ralf and Florian' LPs. This time round, the front is the same as before, but the rear does not feature the band pic, instead there is just text. Also, there is no insert and no title strip.

And that appears to be it for the Japanese releases of the bands early (Philips/Vertigo era) material – or is it? It seems odd that there isn't at least one compilation LP, since so many other countries issued their own unique compilations. No signs of such a release as yet, but, who knows? At the back of my

mind I recall seeing a Kraftwerk compilation LP in a local record store back in 1981 which I assumed to be the German 'High Rail' compilation, but when I eventually tracked down a copy of that some years later it was not the record sleeve I remembered. The one I recall also features a train illustration – is my mind playing tricks? I've had two Aktivität readers express similar stories. Could there be a very rare Japanese compilation, or is it another countries release? Any clues would be greatly appreciated!

Moving on to the bands Capitol and EMI eras, we have first of all 'Radio-Activity' (Capitol, ECS-80418, [1976]), which features a sleeve design identical to the standard issues. It also comes with the standard inner sleeve but does also feature an additional one-sided insert with text in Japanese. The title strip on the front cover is in blue and lime and gives a welcome splash of colour to the otherwise monochrome sleeve. Promo copies are also available for this LP.

'Trans-Europe Express' (Capitol, ECS-80833, [1977]) come with the 'black' sleeve design, as per the UK issue, again with corresponding inner sleeve too. Once more, an additional black and white insert, double sided this time with Japanese text, an additional photo of Kraftwerk (at Düsseldorf railway station) plus a translation of the albums lyrics – which in the case of 'Europe Endless' are woefully inaccurate – 'elegance and thick curtains' indeed!! Complete copies once again come with a title strip on the front. Promo copies also doing the rounds too.

'The Man Machine' (Capitol, ECS-81083, [1978]) has the regular sleeve design present and correct, except when it comes to the inside – no inner sleeve this time, just a black and white insert with extensive Japanese text overprinted on a Kraftwerk pic. Does include a title strip however. The label designs are as per the German edition – i.e., different in comparison to the UK issue. Promo copies available. A re-issue of 'The Man Machine' (Capitol, ECS-63028) is also available, this time wrap-over title paper, no wrap-around strip.

'Computer World' (Toshiba-EMI, EMS 91030, [1981]) is a nice item for completists who wish the novelty of having the Japanese language 'Dentaku' on LP, since this is included in preference to the English 'Pocket Calculator'. Sleeve design is as per the UK edition, with yellow heads on the computer screen, though the labels are like the German edition, green and black. This time round there is no printed inner sleeve but there is a gatefold colour insert with the regular inner sleeve photos on one side (with extra credits relating to this Japanese issue in the appropriate section) while on the other there is a brief year by year (1968-1981) biography, some of the graphics from the 'Dentaku' single, a 'TEE'-period band photo and translations (a bit hit and miss) of the song lyrics. A nice enough item really, again a title strip should also be present and correct in complete copies.

There are promo copies too – these are often listed as having a gatefold sleeve. To the best of my knowledge this is an inaccuracy – the inserts are gatefold, but the sleeve is as per the standard copies. If anyone knows otherwise I would be glad to hear from them with details.

'Electric Cafe' (Toshiba-EMI, EMS 91205, [1986]) is the final Kraftwerk LP to be issued on vinyl in Japan. A nice package, again with a four page gatefold biography and text insert (does it also have the regular inner sleeve too?). Title strip to look out for completists. Promos available for those with more select tastes.

Like the singles, all Japanese promo LPs have a white label with black writing and also a small promo sticker on the title strip.

CASSETTES

Cassettes tend to be of slightly less importance for many collectors, since the packaging tends to be rather sparse. For their fans, here are the details; 'Radio-Activity' (Capitol, ZR25-383), 'Trans-Europe Express' (Capitol, ZR25-384), 'The Man Machine' (Capitol, ZR25-221), 'The Man Machine' (Capitol, ZR28-366) – this appears to be a more expensive issue, available at the same time as ZR25-384, maybe an 8-track tape? – 'Computer World' (Toshiba-EMI, ZR28-613), 'Electric Cafe' (Toshiba-EMI, ZR28-1417).

COMPACT DISCS

Like the vinyl LPs, the compact disc releases tend to benefit with an extra text/lyric insert and also a small title strip on the outside case too.

The Nipponese market has seen quite a number of CD releases of Kraftwerk's material, particularly the Capitol-era work. The earliest Kraftwerk album available on CD format in Japan is 'Autobahn' (Toshiba-EMI, CP 32-5609 [1988]). A re-issue with a different cat. no (Toshiba-EMI CP 28 1019) has also been listed, don't know much about this issue at the present though.

Moving on, as well as the original CD issue of 'Radio-Activity' (Toshiba-EMI, CP 28-1010) from 1989 (?) there has been a reissue from 1995 (Toshiba-EMI, CP 28-1010/CDP 7 46474 2) [1995] as part of the 'Greenline' series.

'Trans-Europe Express' (Toshiba-EMI, CP 21-6044 [1989]), including fold-out insert/text sheet, has also been made available with two further reissues – one as part of the budget price 'Past Masters' reissue series, including additional insert sheet (Toshiba-EMI, CP 21-6024/CDP 7 46473 3) [1995] and also from 1996 as part of the 'Cool Price' series (Toshiba-EMI, TOCP3086, [1996]).

A similar story with 'The Man Machine' (Toshiba-EMI, CP 21-6045 [1989]), including fold-out insert/text sheet) – firstly the budget price 'Past Masters' series reissue, with additional insert sheet (Toshiba-EMI, CP 21-6045/CCM-46039 [1995]) and the 'Cool Price' reissue (Toshiba-EMI, TOCP3087 [1996]).

Obviously these were all 'after the fact' releases. The first Kraftwerk CD to appear at its original time of release was of course 'Electric Cafe' (Toshiba-EMI, CP 32-5175 [1987], complete with an additional fold-out insert/text sheet. Moving onwards to 1991 and 'The Mix' (Toshiba-EMI, TOCP-6804, [1991]) – again, an additional text sheet is included. There are also promo copies in circulation too.

A Japanese only release appeared in September 1993 with a 'The Best of Kraftwerk' compilation (Capitol, TOCP-7913, [1993]), featuring tracks from the three Capitol-era albums, 'Radioactivity', 'Trans-Europe Express' and 'The Man Machine'. The full tracklisting is; 'Geiger Counter', 'Antenna', 'Europe Endless', 'Showroom Dummies', 'Trans-Europe Express', 'The Robots', 'The Model', 'The Man Machine'. Of note, these are all the album-length versions – and it is only 'Trans-Europe Express'

(6.52), not also including 'Metal on Metal'. As for the sleeve design, it is unlike any other. Which is not necessarily to say it is good! – in fact, it's pretty poor. It features what at first looks to be a very dark, random pattern on the front – this is in fact a 3D 'stereogram' image, which reveals, if you can focus your eyes on such things, the word 'Kraftwerk'. The rest of the design is quite plain and there are no pictures at all of Kraftwerk on the design. This CD has since been reissued (Capitol, TOCP-50115, [1995]) in yet another new sleeve design, this time with some computer-generated imagery, again of little relevance to past Kraftwerk designs.

Which only leaves 'Computer World' (EMI, TOCP-8974 [1997]). Strange to think that this album has never previously been available in Japan on CD format until January of 1997! And it was by no means an easy journey. The CD re-issue was announced for release earlier in 1996 and was scheduled to include three bonus tracks – 'Dentaku', 'Tour De France' (7" Version) and 'Tour De France' (Instrumental). Had this re-issue gone ahead as planned then it would have been the first Kraftwerk CD album to have included 'Tour De France' in any form. However, the reissue was delayed... and delayed... and delayed... When it finally appeared in January of 1997, only one bonus track was to be found, the Japanese language 'Dentaku'. Many readers have expressed disappointment, looking forward to securing 'Tour De France' officially on CD for the first time. Still, this is the only appearance of 'Dentaku' on CD, so that alone is of interest. The packaging is as per the US and 1995 UK re-issues, but with an additional fold-out text/lyric sheet.

ODDITIES

'Hellow! New Wave' (EMI, PRP-813?)

A various artists compilation vinyl LP (from 1980?) which includes the Kraftwerk track 'Showroom Dummies' (6.11). Other artists include Buggles, B-52s, The Specials, The Selecter. Pic sleeve has something of a new wave flavour with a picture of a 'punk baby'(!). Rare no doubt, but as it doesn't feature any otherwise unavailable material not particularly essential.

'Spirits of Germany — From Düsseldorf with Love' (Toei Video) is a 51 minute compilation video featuring video clips of 'Die Roboter' and 'Trans Europa Express' plus video clips from other German acts such as DAF, Der Plan, Die Doraus und Die Marinas, Palais Schaumburg and Rheingold, with impressions from Düsseldorf city spliced inbetween the music. If you can track down a copy, buy it – then worry about how to view it. Obviously quite a rarity.

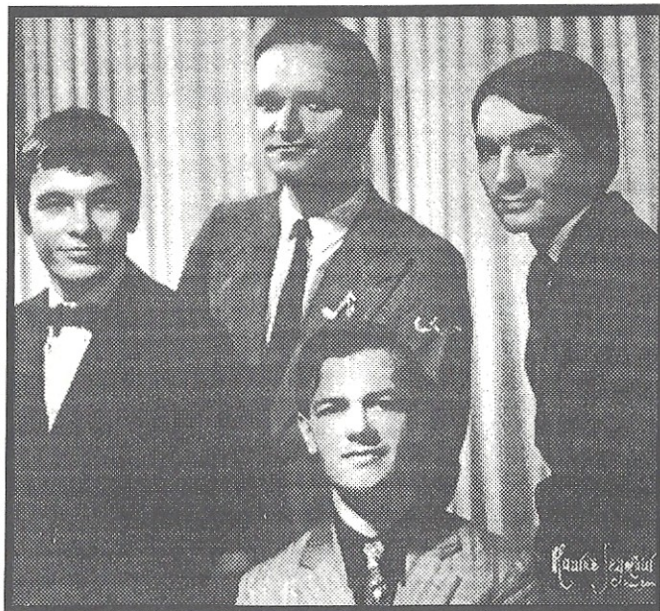
'Frontiers of Progressive Rock' No. 7' (Pioneer SM 048-3227) is a laserdisc featuring a very early Kraftwerk TV appearance of the otherwise unreleased track 'Rückstoss Gondoliere', from the well-known 1971 Beatclub German TV appearance. Like the previous video, something of a rarity – and unless you have a laserdisc player you will not be able to view it! ■

Spot the difference

The subtle differences of the airbrushed artwork, by IAC

Viewed separately in isolation, you may well not notice any difference between the two Kraftwerk pictures reproduced on this page. But by displaying them side by side here I hope you will spot the tell-tale differences. But just why are there such differences anyway, you may well ask? Basically, it is all down to the art of the professional photographic re-toucher and Kraftwerk's deliberate aim to recreate the era of suave, polished musical idols...

The bottom picture is one of the portrait photos used on the LP sleeve for 'Trans-Europe Express' from 1977. That sleeve design (whether it be the colour version (as used in the UK and the US) or the purely black and white version (as used in Germany and other European territories) deliberately fosters a period look – a very obvious attempt to recreate a retro feel, reminiscent of the 1930s/40s in its style, particularly with its stylish typographic layout but also



with the particular styles of the Kraftwerk images. They are an obvious attempt to capture a dated vibe, casting the Kraftwerk members into suave, smartly dressed gents. Look again at the photos and you will see signatures attributed to each. These are the signatures of the photographic studios responsible for the portraiture and latter airbrush embellishments to the photos.

Kraftwerk's choices here are no arbitrary guesswork. These are very deliberate choices. Kraftwerk could as easily have relied on Gunther Froehling or some such other such Kling Klang associate to produce photos of a similar period quality equally as easily, no doubt. However, it is all part of Kraftwerk's deliberate aim of period authenticity that the photographic studios in question – Maurice Seymour studios – have been chosen. Maurice Seymour, was responsible for many such examples of portraiture in the show business realm. Examples of his work from the 1930s are similar in style to the Kraftwerk photo – big band leaders cast in flattering light, the airbrush embellishments helping to cast a smooth, suave, professional sheen to the official publicity portraiture of the show business stars.

The irony is of course that Kraftwerk were at this time as far away as you could possibly imagine from such stars! Think Glenn Miller, similarly pictured in such portraiture, easy-listening brass ensemble conductor – what could Kraftwerk have in common with such styles? Yet, this is the very image, of smoothly retouched, smart-suited musical stars.

Maurice Seymour Studios, as far as my enquiries can tell, were originally based in Chicago, later moving to New York – the Kraftwerk portraiture clearly states New York, certainly. A professional photographic studio, responsible for polished,

showbiz portraiture from the 30s onwards – it is no mere random selection by Kraftwerk, but instead a deliberate choice to purposely recreate a particular period feel (in conjunction with the stylish period type-style layout too remember) in complete antithesis to the stark, modern, synthetic machine-music of the records grooves.

Apart from the photo above, there were others from the same session – and perhaps even more surprising for anyone believing that these pictures were made purposely with 'Trans-Europe Express' in mind – these photos were from 1975 session, presumably perhaps on one of Kraftwerk's first visits to the States. The picture that is to be found on the inner sleeve of the original LP – the 'round the picnic table' portrait is another from this session. It was first used in publicity work in 1975 and can also be found on the rear of the 7" sleeve for 'Radio-Aktivität'. The version that was used on the 'TEE' sleeve was further embellished with additional airbrush artwork by Emil Schult, the lush, verdant, tree and valley scenery. It's strange to realise now that Kraftwerk were using photos from a couple of years previously for their latest record release!

On their own, the photos reproduced here look the same, but we can see, by comparing side by side, several differences as a result of the airbrush artist's craft. Sadly, the resolution here and on the CD covers are far too small, but if you can locate the original LP sleeve and look close up you can see the airbrush embellishments. Most obviously, Wolfgang's hairstyle has been altered into a noticeably smoother, more rounded and 'brycreemed' style. But so too have Karl and Florian's.

The differences are subtle, but enough to cast Kraftwerk into a different, more dated look.

Listening to the stark euro-disco beats of 'Europe Endless' and 'Trans-Europe Express', is this how you would imagine the musicians to look?!

The other photo from the LP sleeve is by a different photographer, a J Stara of Paris. In fact, there are two versions of this picture too – one shows the Kraftwerk line up of Wolfgang Flür, Karl Bartos, Florian Schneider and Ralf Hütter.

The other is identical but the shows the band in reverse order. The portrait is more than merely 'flipped' over – it is a separate version altogether, as the photographers signature reveals – were it simply reversed the signature credit itself would also be back to front!

The lighting on this picture looks at first glance to be unnatural, almost as if the figures have been photographed separately and pasted together into one montage.

However, it may simply be the case that the tell-tale techniques of the 30s show business photographer is again at work – it was common practice for very precise, pencil-thin spotlight beams to be used, so as to pick out particular features in the stars – a handsome cheek bone, sensual lips, softly diffused skin

tones perhaps. Perhaps it is similarly precise, but unnatural, spotlight work at play here.

Kraftwerk are not the only electronic musicians to foster such a dated, period feel to their sleeve artwork/image – Midge Ure, of Ultravox fame, also made use of these kind of photographic techniques for the cover artwork of his 1985 solo album, 'The Gift', another example of smooth black and white portraiture at work.

But as well as the 30s/40s feel, it is perhaps true to concede that the image has a 'timeless' feel too. Truth to tell, the picture could as easily have been taken at any point from the 30s through to the present.

Perhaps most surprising of all however is the more than passing resemblance between 1973s 'Ralf und Florian' LP cover and the black and white version in

particular of 'Trans-Europe Express' - against a similar, draped background, Ralf and Florian are pictured in similar tones – most spookily of all, Florian is similarly suited and even wears the same musical note brooch on both photos! Deja vu, or what?!

Another example perhaps of Kraftwerk's deliberate play on imagery. ■

KLING KLANG THE ELECTRONIC GARDEN

...A look at what goes on instrument-wise in Kling Klang Land



“ Kraftwerk record their records and play their concerts with instruments that are built by themselves. ”

How many times have you read/heard some version of the above quote over the years? In earlier times there were certainly items that Kraftwerk had built or modified for them, but most of Kraftwerk's records have been made with commercially available keyboards/synthesizers. In the 90s in particular, one can see quite easily within the racks of Kling Klang at concerts a multitude of familiar brand names. And the bands involvement with companies such Doepfer and Quasimidi also reveals what all they are currently using – similar equipment to what you yourself can purchase from commercial outlets.

In the 1970's Kraftwerk did indeed use some electronic instruments that they, or their associated engineers, either constructed or modified from existing equipment. It is impossible to say to what extent such equipment was used, but Kraftwerk have also used mainstream electronic equipment as well as their own equipment from their earliest days right up to the present. However, despite the prevalent myth that continues to this day in the media, Kraftwerk's first two LPs were recorded using mainly conventional instrumentation, such as electric piano, organ, guitars, flutes, bass guitar, violin and the like.

Even up until 1975 Ralf Hütter could still be seen using a Farfisa 'Professional Piano' electric piano in live concerts, a mainstay of their first LP ('Kraftwerk', 1970) in particular. The band added Moog Mini-Moog, ARP Odyssey, EMS-Synthi A, Moog Polymoog, Korg PS-3300, Sequential Circuits Prophet V synthesizers and other mainstream and readily available equipment throughout the seventies as they became available, just like their contemporaries. However, album credits do reveal exotically titled instrumentaion such as 'Rhythmusmaschine' and 'Synthanorma Sequenzer'.

Before the age of samplers, to recreate 'real' sounds a keyboard called the *Mellotron* was the most popular choice for recreating string and orchestral sounds by many acts, from the late 60s (such as The Beatles) right through the 70s (perhaps most famously by King Crimson) even into the 80s (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark being particular fans). By 'Radio-Activity' (and most famously 'Trans-Europe Express') similar string and orchestral tones were added to the Kling Klang arsenal – however, it appears that these sounds emanate not from a Mellotron but an instrument by the name of the *Vako Orchestron*. By the 80s and the advent of the sampling age it is rumoured that the band had purchased a CMI Fairlight, which supposedly broke down when the band disassembled it into a rack-mounted version(!) – how accurate this is is a little unclear however. It is however very well documented that by the mid-80s the band had moved on to the more advanced Synclavier synthesizer, some of its presets are clearly audible on 'Electric Cafe' (something of an anomaly for a band so fastidious in creating their own unique sounds previously, to rely on presets?). For what it's worth, both the CMI Fairlight and NED Synclavier were extremely expensive bits of kit! If you're familiar with Jean Michel Jarre's 'Magnetic Fields' LP you can see pictures of the Fairlight's monitor screen on the original inner cover. Other early exponents of the Fairlight were Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush, amongst others.

The bands 1991 tours revealed many well known brand names nestled amongst the Kling-Klang equipment, including Midi-Moog keyboards, AKAI samplers, a Waldorf Microwave and the like. More recently, the band have been name-checked in the more technical-oriented music press as having been involved in the development of some new equipment; Doepfer MAQ16/3 Analog-MIDI Sequencer, the Doepfer MOGLI Midi-Glove (MOGLI = MIDI Operated Glove Interface), the Quasimidi QUASAR sound module and in early 1996 Florian Schneider reviewed the Doepfer A-100 module for a German magazine and provided a demo of its vocoder capabilities in the magazines accompanying free CD – he was involved to some extent in the development of the instrumentation, though primarily in the realm of providing feedback rather than a ‘hands-on’ development role. The Schaltwerk electronic percussion module from Doepfer has also been incorporated into the Kling Klang set and could be seen at this years concerts, along with the custom-made MMK2 mini-keyboard. Whether the Schaltwerk module had any Kraftwerk input at all in its design is unknown.

Some of the more well documented of the bands own-made equipment however is thus;

‘RHYTHMUSMASCHINE’

This device is amongst the items listed in the credits for ‘Kraftwerk 2’. An electronic percussion unit (possibly identified as being an Echolette ‘Drummer One’ electronic percussion device) modified, seemingly, by Florian Schneider, from an existing home-organ rhythm unit. It can be heard clearly on ‘Kling Klang’, ‘Tanz Musik’ etc. Whether it was actually modified much is debatable, since the rhythms heard of the above tracks are standard pre-programmed patterns; later modified (or totally redesigned?) to be played using metal batons. This quote from Ralf Hütter in ‘Electronics and Music Maker’, September 1981, explains; “In 1971 Kraftwerk was still without a drummer, so I bought a cheap drum machine giving some preset dance rhythms. By changing the basic sounds with tape echo and filtering we made the rhythm tracks for our second album... Commercial synthesizers came fairly late into Germany and it was not until the third album that we started to use them. By that time, Wolfgang Flür had joined us to play a custom built drum system...”.

OPTICALLY-TRIGGERED ELECTRONIC PERCUSSION ‘CAGE’

Debuted on some of Kraftwerk’s 1976 concerts, this rig-up of equipment enabled a Kraftwerk member (Wolfgang Flür primarily but also Karl Bartos) to stand alongside it and trigger electronic percussion sounds (snare drum, bass drum and cymbal) by using hand movements to break light beams. The unit was apparently problematic for live use and was never again used live after the 1976 concerts.

From an unidentified 1976 music press interview, the following;

“We had been working with several other people on a modified pickup for flutes, but it was with the percussion that we first began to get good results. Through the use of photo-electric beams we set up a circuit which would operate a selection of cassette tapes when the beam was broken. By synchronising

the rhythm on tape with the rhythm of a drummer's hand, say, an almost infinite variety of syncopations can be produced simply each time the drummer strikes a beat on his conventional drum-kit. We patented this idea some time ago..."

The same interview also credits an 'electronic vibraphone' as having been another item made by the group.

'ROBOVOX'

This could be seen behind Florian's position in the 1991-93 stage set. This may well be the equipment built for the band in conjunction with a gentleman by the name of Falk Kuebler. Obviously it is (at least) one of the devices used by the band for generating the robotic voices as heard on their records. It is possible that this is a device modified from an existing computer by Florian and one of the bands back-room technicians, which has been referred to in the past.

In terms of Vocoder, Florian is reputed to have built up quite a collection of these. It is known that the 1981 Kling Klang set included both Sennheiser and EMS models.

'SYNTHANORMA SEQUENZER'

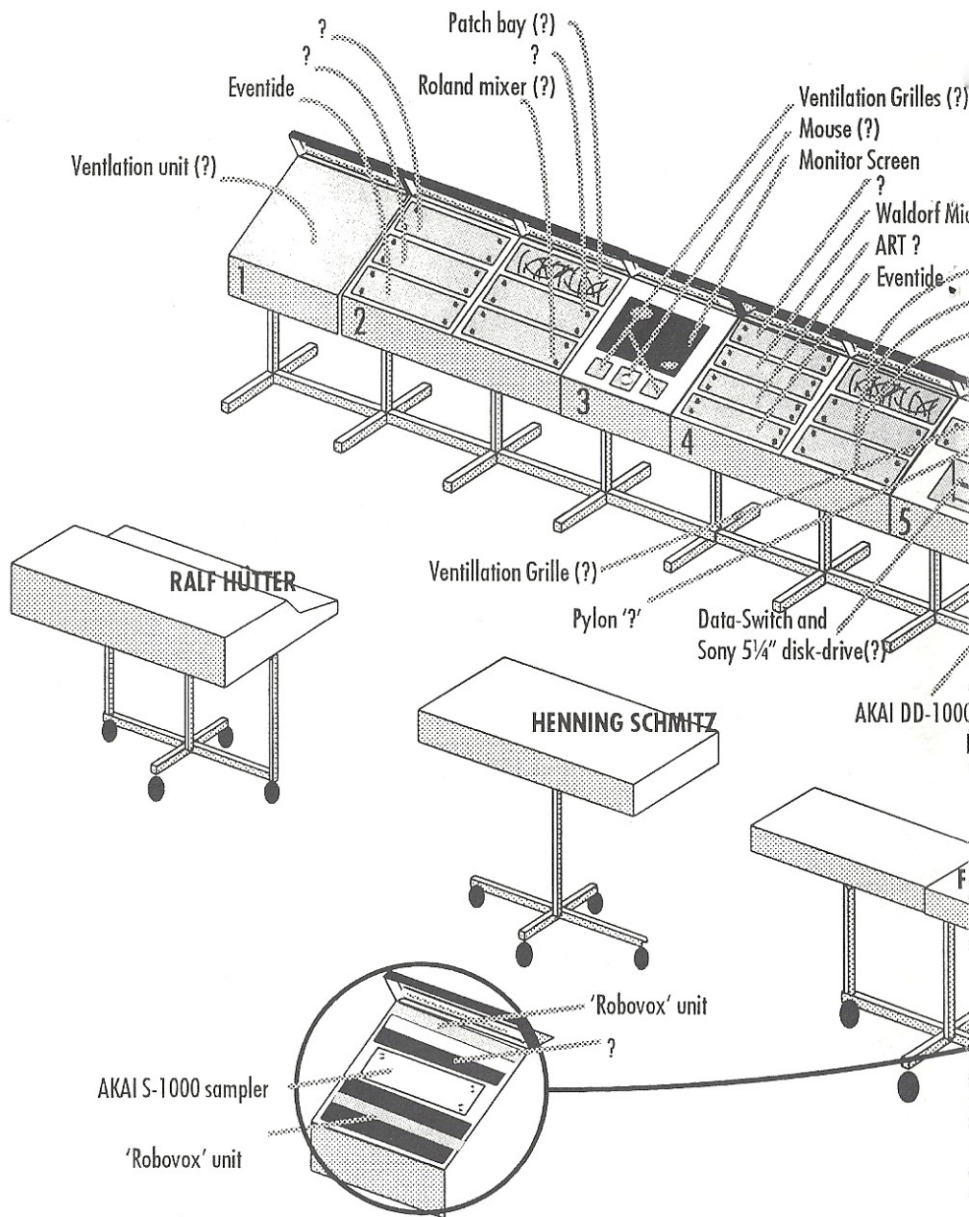
Credited on the sleeve for 'Trans-Europe Express', this appears to be some kind of sequencer developed by/for the band by/with Matten and Wiechers of Bonn. Not a lot is known about it I'm afraid. 1981s 'E&MM' article refers to 'two analogue sequencers which will produce up to 64 notes. The many rows of switches have 'in', 'shift' and 'stop' settings for trigger, rest and reset points, as well as pitch control. The sequence can run as two x 32 in parallel or 1 x 64 in series'. This may well be the Synthanorma Sequencer. The article also makes mention of the bands use of an expanded-memory Roland MC-8 Microcomposer, which Ralf remarks as being "much easier to use than the analogue sequencers". A view not shared by Karl Bartos, it seems, who is quoted as remarking in the March 1998 issue of 'Sound on Sound' magazine the following; "It was crap! We never used it on any recordings and wasted a hell of a lot of time on it, actually. Instead, we used custom-built, very big, analogue-style sequencers with 32-steps".

KARL'S ITALIAN KEYBOARD.

The 1981 E&MM interview with Ralf Hütter once again; "...Karl's keyboard -- specially made in Italy to replace Korg's keyboard controller, which operates the Korg PS-3300 polyphonic synthesizer". Not a lot of detail on this, but colour pictures reveal that within its shiny metal casing there are LEDs which show the keys which are being played at the time!

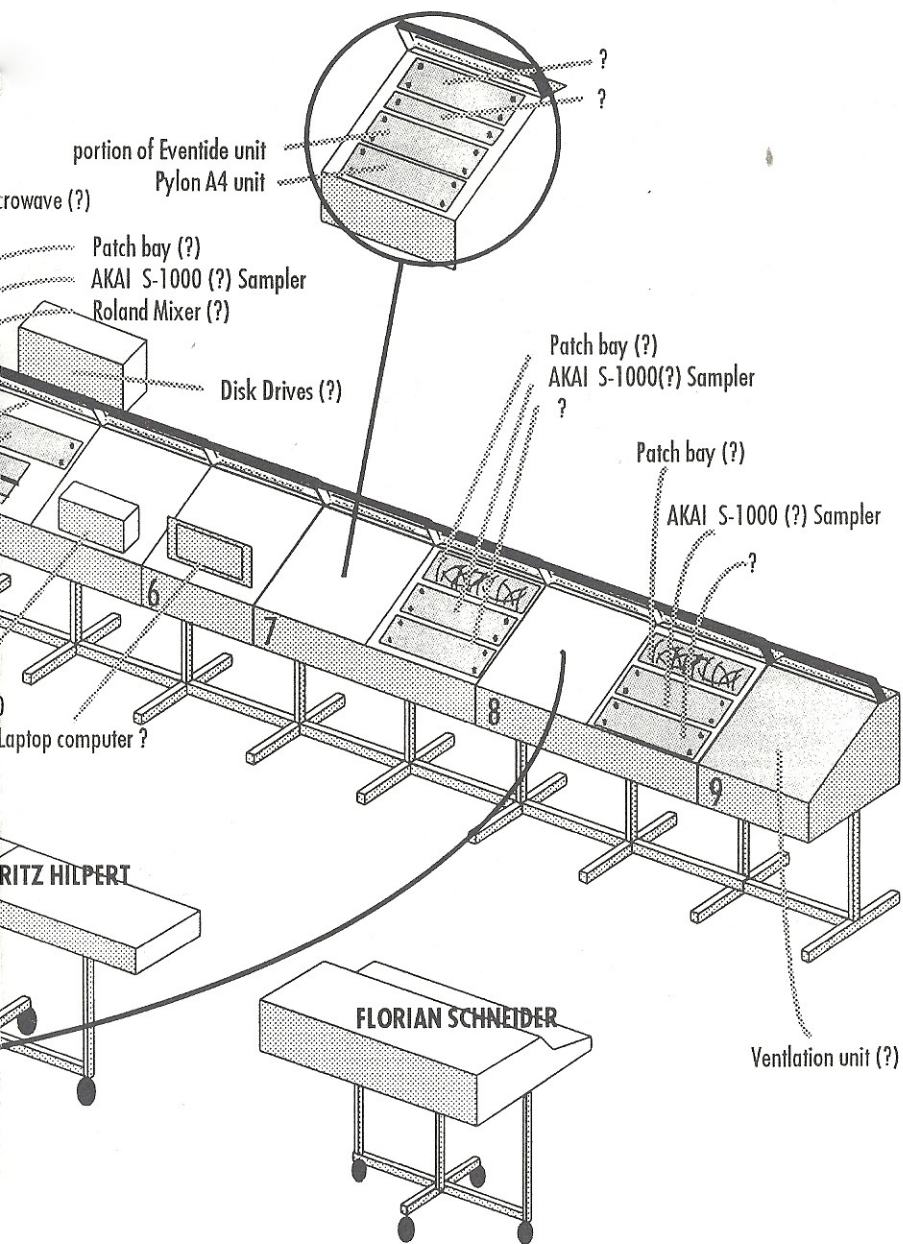
'OPTICAL LIGHT-DISC' KEYBOARD

This is in fact not a Kraftwerk invention, it appears. The 1981 E&MM interview describes the following as part of the bands instruments; "... a special light-disc instrument >CONTINUED PAGE 22



KLING KLANG v1992

Represented above is a diagram of the setup. I have recreated this from close-up photos and technical knowledge goes — or it's a start anyway and I hope

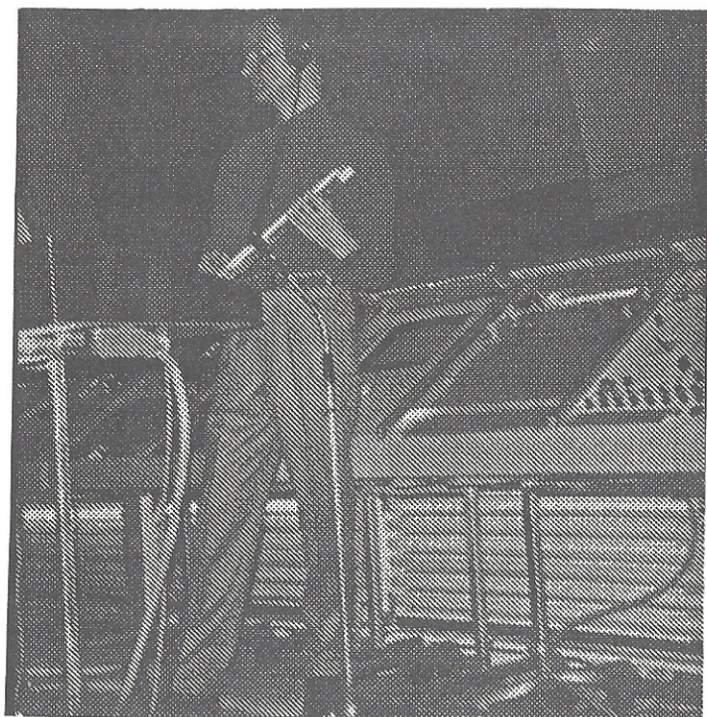


am of the 1992 version of the Kling Klang set as on display at the bands concerts in Norwich and Leicester. I've
 photographs of the stage set that I took at the time. The equipment identified above is as far as my limited
 obviously those with a (?) beside them are ones where I'm a little uncertain. So, it's somewhat incomplete — but
 this is of some interest for those fans interested in the equipment side of Kraftwerk. — IAC

> FROM PAGE 19 from Florida for mono-choir sounds...'. From the same unidentified 1976 interview as earlier quoted, the text also notes; 'Besides their photo-electric percussion equipment, they have made an electronic vibraphone and keyboards, and through full use of cassette tapes, have perfected a light-disc organ which plays an impressive set of melodies and rhythms in programmed sequence.' This latter quote gives the impression that this instrument is one of Kraftwerk's inventions – however, this instrument has actually been identified as being a Vako Orchestron keyboard, so it is not in fact a Kraftwerk-made device. Similar in nature to a Mellotron keyboard, in that it uses samples of pre-recorded real instruments (for this device, on plastic optical discs, whereas Mellotrons use tape).

FLORIAN'S 'ELECTRONIC FLUTE'

First seen on the inner sleeve of the 'Radio-Activity' LP, and in concert in 1981 (below), another Kraftwerk original. It would appear to be a controller



to trigger external synthesizer equipment, not a sound source in itself. Ralf from the 1981 'E&MM' interview once more... "It's not actually blown but uses keys situated in flute-pad positions that are 'touched' by the fingers to give a D/A control voltage/trigger output for any of the synthesizers." ■

Amongst the source material used in the preparation of this article are articles mailed to the unofficial Kraftwerk Internet mailing list by the following individuals over the years, whom I acknowledge here; Andrew C. Crowell, Rick Jansen, ManMachn2@aol.com.

Most of the information is gleaned from the very useful article from the September 1981 issue of the UK 'Electronics and Music Maker' magazine, by Mark Beecher and from the interview with Karl Bartos in the March 1998 issue of 'Sound on Sound' magazine.

The Lighter Side...

Some more of Kraftwerk's ground-breaking equipment modifications, not generally known about... (only joking!)

DUBREQ STYLOPHONE.

Move over Rolf Harris, come in please David Bowie, your time is up. For 1981s 'Pocket Calculator' Kraftwerk used the Dubreq Stylophone. Except that the batteries had run out. "One of our engineers helped us with this replacement operation, we in fact made use of Duracell equipment, especially bought from the news kiosk around the corner from Kling Klang. We have considered patenting this technique."

CASIO POCKET CALCULATOR.

Again, from 'Pocket Calculator', strangely enough – "we wanted to make use of this for an entire album – but one of our engineers had to resit his Maths examination and wouldn't give it back afterwards. These are amongst the problems that working in isolation within Kling Klang can involve. For us, it is the only way, each and every day. So long as we can go out for ice-creams too".

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS 'SPEAK AND SPELL'

Heard throughout the 'Computer World' LP, Kraftwerk extensively modified this item for their purposes – "Yes, Florian was responsible for this – we found that the existing vocabulary within the unit was somewhat limited for our purposes – while on one of our workdays at Kling Klang, Florian managed to record the word 'bollocks' into the unit – from here we also modified the machine to say 'arse' and 'jobbie' – such modification of equipment is quite routine for us within Kling Klang".

KRAFTWERK - TERMINE 1998

Kraftwerk's 1998 Tour Dates (as currently displayed via the WWW pages of their official concert agency, MCT.)

02.06.1998 J-Tokio - Akasaka Blitz

03.06.1998 J-Tokio - Akasaka Blitz (Now all sold out)

04.06.1998 J-Tokio - Akasaka Blitz (Now all sold out)

07.06.1998 USA-San Francisco, CA - Warfield Theatre

(Tickets go on sale 3.5.98, Info Tel. 510-7622277, www.ticketmaster.com)

08.06.1998 USA-Los Angeles, CA - The Palladium

(Tickets go on sale 25.4.98, Info Tel. 213-8517441, www.ticketmaster.com)

10.06.1998 USA-Chicago, IL - Riviera Theatre

(Tickets go on sale 2.5.98, Info Tel 312-2666262, www.ticketmaster.com)

11.06.1998 USA-Detroit, MI - State Theatre

(Tickets go on sale 25.4.98, Info Tel 313-9637237, www.ticketmaster.com)

13.06.1998 USA-New York, NY - Hammerstein Ballroom

(Tickets go on sale 8.5.98, Info Tel 973-7440770, www.ticketmaster.com)

14.06.1998 USA-Washington DC - Free Tibet Festival

18.06.1998 E-Barcelona - Sonar Festival

(WWW Info Pages; www.sonar.es)

25.06.1998 DK-Roskilde - Roskilde Festival (WWW Info Pages; www.roskilde-festival.dk)

Images

RALF HÜTTER signs autographs for fans, 1992 (Photo courtesy of The Prof)





Live in Italy, 1981 (Photo supplied by Emilio Giaretta)

Kraftwerk's blue period! (From Italian magazine 'Il Rock' (Supplied by Emilio Giaretta)



Michael Rother – Face Out interview

Originally printed in Face-Out fanzine, Issue 6, early 1980.

Michael Rother: "With Kraftwerk we smashed up the structures. I was used to playing inside the 'pop' structures. There is no Kraftwerk album with the kind of music that we were playing at this time – Klaus Dinger, Florian Schneider and myself. Hütter and Schneider split up, after the first Kraftwerk album was released, for about one year, and I joined. Hütter wasn't in this formation. It was very heavy music that we were playing. It is hard for me to explain what the music was like. Perhaps 'chaotic' is the word that I am looking for – punk is like Sunday School after this!"

CF: 'Were you using electronics at this time?'

MR: "Yes, we were... (thinks)... maybe we had some structures in our heads, so to speak, but I don't think too many! I was playing guitar. I started to learn keyboards with Harmonia."

CF: 'As you say, there is no Kraftwerk album of this line-up, but did you ever get into the studio?'

MR: "Once with Conny to record an album, but we didn't finish it... it was the difference between being 'live' and being in the studio. It was a bit 'sterile', if that is the right word... it was us, I suppose. Plank was the engineer. I think that in a 'normal' recording the producer has a bigger say in the finished record than with us – I mean, Plank was important to us and still is to me. When we did the mixing, he had some ideas, but he's not the sort of guy who says 'a bit of bass here, some piano there'. That's not the way the producer Plank works."

CF: 'So Plank could be more 'sympathetic' than others?'

MR: "Again, it's hard for me to explain, but basically he's not the sort of guy to show up at nine o'clock, 'come on boys, finish your coffee'. He works in a different way... he is one of the advantages of the way he works!"

CF: 'So there are some tapes lying around somewhere from these sessions?'

MR: "Yes, three or four tracks, 20-30 minutes, I'm not sure. They might be released... (laughs)... posthumously!"

CF: 'You hope!'

MR: "I'm not sure whether to hope or to fear." (laughs)

CF: 'That's for the listener to decide? Maybe someone will find them and release them.'

MR: "No. Conny has them and he won't release them without permission."

CF: 'Has he ever asked?'

MR: "It's not a question of asking, but we talk about it. There is not the interest in these tapes that there once might have been. The music was not like anything that got released by Kraftwerk, but we gave

up in the studio. This was in '71... Dinger and I were only in Kraftwerk for 5-6 months. There was a lot that happened in that short time."

CF: 'It must have been an important time for you, for your musical development.'

MR: "Not perhaps for development, that may be the wrong word — it was a matter of breaking up the structures. It was like erasing the past. We could never go back."

CF: 'Why did this line up (of Kraftwerk) break up?'

MR: (pause) "We couldn't stand each other!" (laughs). "Seriously, it is something that I can maybe laugh about now, but at the time it was very hard for us. The music was very depressing we had no roadies. We just turned up in a small bus, the three of us with all our equipment, doing it all ourselves. We did one big festival, with Family, I think. they had a dozen or so roadies, and we played before them. These roadies were already taking our equipment off stage when we were still playing. We couldn't argue! Of course, Family jumped on stage with everything perfect and we packed our gear and were gone... it was very interesting, but a hard time and very exhausting. We used to argue after a time. It was inevitable in these conditions, so we split, and Hütter rejoined Schneider. This is a period that present day Kraftwerk tend to forget. Sometimes I read some, er, 'polished' histories of this time, when there was Hütter/Schneider/Dinger. Dinger got left out of the history..."

CF: 'That left you and Dinger with NEU! ?'

MR: "We had NEU! in common musically."

CF: 'Do you think that any of NEU! came from the unrecorded Kraftwerk? I mean, there is no recorded music that NEU! can be traced back to...'

MR: "Yes, of course. It was Dinger and me playing, so we took ourselves, but the music changed because Schneider wasn't there. You know, it very much depends on the individuals. It's not like where you have some rock and roll bands who can change the bass or guitar and still sound the same. With us it was the combinations. Everyone was important."

CF: 'You felt that you could take NEU! into the studio?'

MR: "Yes, but we had one big problem recording the first one-time. We only had three and a half days and nights. It was terrible really! With playbacks and all that's involved, it takes a very long time. If you have four or five musicians, you can get the basic sounds down very quickly, but with us, with only one guitar and some drums..."

CF: 'So the hard part was to fill the sound out?'

MR: "Yes, even now it takes me a long time. Imagine the problems for me with overdubs, with as many as twenty different instruments..."

CF: 'Did you manage to play live in the early days?'

MR: "Not at first. We tried to appear, but we couldn't. Not with the sound we had, which was much too thin. We did try with Uli Trepte, who was with us for a while in '72. He had just left Guru Guru,

but it didn't work out. Like I said, it is a matter of the individuals. He tried to play some of the lines, he really did."

CF: 'It wouldn't appear to be in his nature to play in this way.'

MR: "You can't take an individual and tell him to play something and expect him to capture the spirit – not with this music. We managed eight gigs. Uli, I think, left us quite disappointed. I was sorry because I liked him."

CF: 'The album got quite a good response, didn't it?'

MR: "It was a sort of 'hit'. It sold about 35,000 copies, which was a lot for a German band at this time."

CF: 'How did you get the deal?'

MR: "Like I did with 'Flammende Herzen', we went from company to company."

CF: 'You had no deal prior to going into the studio?'

MR: "That was our way, no deal – to do it this way gives one more freedom."

CF: 'Korber was at Brain then?'

MR: "Yes, we met him in the studio."

CF: 'Did you go to Brain first?'

MR: "I can't remember, but they paid the most!"

CF: 'You obviously had a good enough response to enable you to record a second album, which was a bit of a surprise when it came out...'

MR: "The second album was a shock for some people. A lot of people thought we were making fun of them. The second side is very strange, with one piece being played at a faster speed, then the needle jumps, then half speed. We put a record on in the studio off-centre, and it goes woo urrrr!"

CF: 'How does it go?'

MR: "Woo urrrr!" (laughs)

CF: 'Why do this?'

MR: "Well, we took a long time with the first side. It was so expensive that we couldn't afford much more, so we had to rush through the second side. Call it art if you will." (shrugs)

CF: 'So you weren't thinking of the listener?'

MR: "It was a statement – but I don't necessarily think so now."

CF: 'Still no gigs?'

MR: "At this time, United Artists were interested in releasing 'NEU!' in England and so we were looking for musicians to join us for touring, and that's when I met up with Cluster. I found that their music was more interesting than mine. Harmonia was the result."

CF: 'How did this come about? I mean, did you know Cluster from before?'

MR: "We did a concert with Cluster, back in the days of Kraftwerk, the two of them. It was a terrible experience. The hall was packed out, 1,500 people. We played first, we agreed with Cluster to do this. The audience wanted more of us so we encoored and then stopped to let Cluster on. The audience didn't like it – they wanted to beat Cluster up. They turned their speakers round for them and threw tomatoes and things at them. It was uproar. I was afraid for them, but they played on and didn't seem to show any fear. After a while most of the people left, but a lot of them still remained, standing on chairs and yelling for more of us. We had really heated them up."

CF: 'There was no bad feeling between you as a result?'

MR: "No, it wasn't my fault! But the circumstances were unhappy... Anyway, I took my guitar along with me to see how it would work out between us and it was different – the energy was going out of NEU!

CF: 'How about the name?'

MR: "Many of the clubs around here are called Harmonia clubs and these are for singers, but we took the name for many reasons. We played 'harmonic' music and we lived communally, but it was more than the music."

CF: 'What was Dinger doing at this time?'

MR: "I can't really remember." (thinks) "He was a carpenter, I believe, for a while, to earn some money."

CF: 'How did you manage to record the third NEU! if the energy was going?'

MR: "Well, for me to join Harmonia was a positive move, to develop my music. I had an idea that Klaus could join us and that we could make better music than NEU!."

CF: 'Don't you find it ironic that instead of Cluster joining NEU!, NEU! was joining Cluster?'

MR: "No, I didn't see it that way. It was a new thing. Not Cluster and Rother, but Moebius, Roedelius and Rother, a new concept. We had endless talks with Dinger. At one time he nearly joined us, but at the last minute he found that he had too many reservations about it and he was also working with his brother and Hans Lampe in Dusseldorf. He wanted me to join them."

CF: 'As NEU! ?'

MR: "Yes, but the music was too thin for me and it wasn't too interesting."

CF: 'So the third NEU! was a contract-filler then?'

MR: "We didn't have to do it, but to be honest, the money mattered. I think there is a gap between the first two albums and the third. It would not have been possible to have done it without me working with Harmonia. The money was not the most important reason – it was done when it was possible to play some music."

CF: 'By the way, what do you think of La Dusseldorf?'

MR: "NEU! was a concept... and La Dusseldorf has different people, different combinations. Like I said before, it could not be NEU! without Dinger and Rother. (Note: I had mentioned that I found some similarities on occasion between La Dusseldorf and NEU! – CF.)

CF: 'You were able to develop your own ideas within Harmonia?'

MR: "We all had our own idea in Harmonia. I had NEU! and they had Cluster as a possibility. This is really how a separate album like the third NEU! came about... 'Immer Wieder' from the 'De Luxe' album nearly appeared on the NEU! album. That was one of my ideas, I thought that it was more Harmonia though. Lyrically, it is the sum of our experiences – the ups and downs, something working, then falling through. The German listeners didn't seem to understand, or rather didn't want to understand it. They attributed a certain banality to it, which was a bit disappointing because I thought it was one of my best, still do. The lyrics, or better, the harmonies (the sound) fit in well with the music. We were really disappointed with the reaction to Harmonia."

CF: 'You were saying earlier (i.e., before the tape was rolling) that you've always believed that any music you'd had a hand in would sell...'

MR: "Oh yes, but not as 'commercial' music with all that this term means, not deliberately for sale. It was good music, and I also thought that it would sell, do you see what I mean? I also thought that it was better music than NEU!, but there was no reaction... (pause) ...not yet! I haven't given up hope!"

CF: 'I suppose that Moebius and Roedelius were also a bit upset.'

MR: "I think that I felt it more. I mean, Cluster were never successful in the way that I had been with NEU! I thought the music was better, and I was convinced that therefore it would sell. But the opposite was so."

CF: 'Did this have anything to do with the demise of Harmonia?'

MR: "Oh no, we were working in a small space, and we are different people... the difficulties of getting together proved bigger than the benefits, the positive aspects."

CF: 'Did Harmonia ever gig?'

MR: "Yes, but we had no luck. We played in Germany, Holland as well. There was less than 50 people at some of the gigs, but a good percentage of the audience, whether the audience was big or small seemed to like it. Despite this the albums, er, flopped."

CF: 'Was it good to get out and play live again?'

MR: "OK, but I am not a live person. We didn't play anything from the album at first, we'd just get a key and start. Sometimes it was good, other times not so. Later we started to do some things from the album and we got a better reception. The sales didn't get much better though."

CF: 'Were you working on any solo tapes?'

MR: "Not until the end when it was clear that we were falling apart as a band. I started because Cluster had Cluster to fall back on and I had nothing, no NEU!. Well, Klaus (Dinger) wanted me to go to Dusseldorf for La Dusseldorf's second album, and maybe change the name to NEU!, or whatever. This was just after the first La Dusseldorf album, I met him when the first album had been released... I never really wanted to go solo. Now, I have had solo experience, and it is good, but at the time I didn't think that I could do it. I had no choice, really, because there was no-one to work with..."

CF: 'But you felt the need to use a drummer?'

MR: "Ah, Jaki... I would have liked him to work on the second Harmonia. That would have been something! I met him at the time I was recording 'Flammende Herzen'. I'd always had him in mind because I knew the Can sound and liked it – I knew that he could be the man."

CF: 'A lot of people assume that he was just a sessioneer...'

MR: "This is not true. He was involved, we had discussions, although the finished tracks with the overdubs were my responsibility. I played him some tracks that I had done previously, with drum boxes, to give him an idea. We played the basic tracks with me on guitar and keyboards, then I overdubbed. On one of the tracks, Jaki played to one of the finished tracks."

CF: 'Flammende Herzen' sounds very 'together' anyway...'

MR: "Yes, and that may be coincidence to a certain extent – Jaki was playing to the harmony on the guitar and the keyboards, and I told him where the accents would be."

CF: 'So, you now had the finished tapes, and I presume that you had to drag them round the record companies. Did you go to Brain again?'

MR: "Yes, but they hated me. I had a previous problem with Brain which I don't think that too many people are aware of, in that with NEU! there was a fantastic offer from Capitol records in America for the NEU! albums. They were willing to pay a great deal of money, and Metronome would have got a large slice of it. The contract was terrible though. I got an English lawyer in who specialises in American contracts... it didn't work out as I saw it, but Brain weren't worried about the terms. This was at the time of Harmonia, and I feared that it would stop me working with Harmonia, what with 'exclusive rights' clauses and all that bullshit, so I didn't sign. This was, by the way, after the third album. I played the 'Flammende Herzen' tapes to Brain. I knew that they were angry with me, but I had no choice really, because there weren't too many people to take these sort of tapes to – Brain, EMI-Electrola... hmmm... now these people said no at the time, but they are very interested now!" (laughs) (pause...) "This was another hard time."

CF: '1976, just you and your tape. Do you find these business aspects at all degrading?'

MR: "No, not degrading, not as deep as that. I may not like it, but I had had the experience before, so I had got used to it. I was not expecting anyone to jump up and say 'wonderful music, we'll take it' just like that. For instance, an example of how it works for us over here. They say 'Michael Rother, who is he? This is instrumental music; there is no manager...'. No, not degrading, just disappointing."

CF: 'How did you get in with Sky?'

MR: "Not immediately! At that time, Sky was just one man and his typewriter. It is different now of course."

CF: 'But you were just one man and his tape.'

MR: "It is different from the other point of view. There is distribution, pressing and all that. I thought that it needed a little more than a typewriter, and we had some very difficult negotiations, but we agreed in the end. It was a big risk for him – for both of us."

CF: 'Flammende Herzen' wasn't an 'instant hit', was it?'

MR: "Not at first."

CF: 'Why do you think that happened?'

MR: "Well, there is this radio journalist who had been into NEU!, Harmonia etc. He played the album, then I did a live interview, and whoosh! It was good because he played it and people went out and bought it. There was no campaign, no publicity except for a few small ads. this is the best way. In the early days, 3,000 went in one week, 7,000 after two weeks. This was more than Harmonia had sold in two years. The novelty has worn off a bit now, I am used to it, but I was excited at the time... my contract

is now up with Sky and I am free now. I don't think for too long, though – I will wait and see what happens with 'Katzenmusik'."

CF: 'How long does it take you to record an album?'

MR: "'Herzen' took two weeks, complete. For 'Sterntaler' there was four weeks with a mobile outside my house, with a further three weeks in the studio. 'Katzenmusik' took two or three months in my studio here."

CF: 'Do you intend to go on the road?'

MR: "It is not very practical. people ask me about this all the time, but I don't think so. It would be too much work, as much as another album, and I would have to get a proper band together. The actual music would not be the problem, it's just that it would have to be done just right, or it would be 'plastic'."

CF: 'Is there any concept or philosophy behind your music?'

MR: "The music comes first, the 'idea' second. I would prefer to release the music as 'Michael Rother 1979', or whatever year it happens to be, but people like a name and a package."

CF: 'Anything planned for the new decade?'

MR: "It's not really of interest to me. I am not concerned with fashion. I never really expect anything to happen, so why now? People like to have these categories and ideas to look forward to and to hold on to -- it's not for me."

CF: 'I know you're not a great listener, but is there anyone whose music you like?'

MR: "Kraftwerk, Moebius and Roedelius..."

CF: 'Moebius has never really made a solo, has he, unlike Roedelius...'

MR: "Well, 'Liliental' was a solo really, it was his concept, his answer to 'Durch die Wüste'."

CF: 'Have you read the review in 'Face Out'?''

MR: "Yes, but I have a different opinion. I like the first half of the second side, quite good. I also read the review of 'Jardin au Fou', which I thought was good."

CF: 'Some of your English fans say that your music, your solo music, is 'light' and 'easy'. They like the 'heavier' stuff, and say your music suffers by comparison.'

MR: "It is not as 'easy' as one would think. There is a lot of detail. On the new one I feel that there is a lot more background behind the lines than the first two. There is more depth, and the sound is, er, broader. that's why I spent more time on it – more relaxation... I can hear some people say, 'this Rother is a clever guy, very smart to release 'Flammende Herzen'. They think that I just sit here and release hit music, calculating nice tunes and a good image. I don't understand that at all. I don't work in this way."

CF: 'I think we've got a better idea now. I have, anyway. Thanks for sparing some time to tell us, Michael.'

Yamo at KLEMDag 1997

a report on Wolfgang Flür's appearance at the most recent KLEM day event, by Steve Negus.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend KLEMDag annual electronic music festival held in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and was amazed to find that one of the attractions was a presentation by none other than Wolfgang Flür. Mr Flür was there to promote Yamo and to air the 'Time Pie' CD. It kicked off with the showing of the Yamo EPK (Electronic Press Kit) featuring very rare footage of the man himself as a young boy with his family and then film shot by Wolfgang of Kraftwerk's visit to New York in 1975/76. These pictures I have to say were fantastic and have never been seen anywhere before. It showed the band walking from their plane in New York and then walking through the city's streets. Brilliant! The EPK also detailed the brief history to the present of Yamo, with Mr Flür talking about his love for Düsseldorf and the coming together with all those involved with the project. It featured the full-length version of 'Stereomatic' and other clips in the studio along with snippets of tracks from 'Time Pie'. After the EPK had finished, Mr Flür appeared from a side door and walked to a podium which was set up in the hall of the presentation to loud applause. He proceeded to talk about the music within 'Time Pie', speaking initially about the first few tracks, then we listened to them as well as watching video footage as well as still images on a large screen. This was done throughout the album, speaking in



between tracks. As well as the still images and video clips, he also had a dancer called Cindy, who danced to a couple of tracks from the album, which included 'Speech Dancer' – the dancing was very effective and combined vivid lighting and dry ice to add to the effect.

I am lucky enough to have a copy of 'Time Pie' but it was amazing to link the music with that of the images that Wolfgang Flür had created for this first public showing of the Yamo project. The majority of the imagery were still slides depicting the songs – this was done, apparently, to divert the viewer from the moving image and concentrate on the music. For me at least, this worked and I think that was the general view of the audience.

As for the man himself, speaking between tracks he seemed very at ease and made jokes regarding his English not being too hot, but I must say that I thought his English was remarkable. He seemed very pleased with the Yamo project and how it has evolved thus far and after the presentation he greeted the members of the audience for an autograph signing session. I was not able to get a picture along with Mr Flür but was able to get some very good close-up pictures.

As you can imagine, for me being a huge Kraftwerk fan since I was 12 (I'm now the grand old age of 28) this was an amazing meeting with one of my heroes, hence the reason why I have written this little article.

Photos; Page 34 — Wolfgang, giving his presentation at KlemDAG, 1997. ■ Page 35 — Wolfgang in Kraftwerk's 'The Telephone Call' promo video, 1987.



Questions/Answers 3

The third in a regular series looking at all the Kraftwerk 'myths' that have built up over the years

The German release of the 'Trans-Europa Express' LP contains an extra track called 'Abzug'.

No. The record does indeed contain a track called 'Abzug', which is not listed on other 1977 'TEE' releases, but it is still part of 'Metal On Metal'. eg;

On the original German LP release the 'TEE' tracks are listed with the following timings;

Trans-Europa Express (6min. 40sec.), 'Metall auf Metall' (2min. 10sec.), 'Abzug' (4min. 42sec.) (Total 13min. 32sec.)

On the original UK release the 'TEE' tracks are;

'Trans-Europa Express' (6min. 40sec.), Metal On Metal (6min. 52sec.) (Total 13min. 32sec.)

The corresponding CD releases are different altogether, in terms of where the tracks start and stop! By 1991 and the re-recorded versions appearing on 'The Mix', 'Abzug' had moved after 'Metal On Metal' on all versions of the album.

Ralf Hütter studied 10 years classical music (piano) at the Düsseldorf Konservatorium before founding Kraftwerk.

We know that Ralf was born in 1946 and that he founded *Organisation* along with Florian, who he met at the Düsseldorf Konservatorium in 1968. This presumes then that Ralf must have been studying at the Düsseldorf Kons. since 1958 – 12 years old! There is no doubt that Ralf did indeed study there, but not for 10 years!

The band play on a record called 'Ich bin a Domina' by Die Dominas.

No, but there is a slight Kraftwerk involvement with the actual music and also by the fact that Ralf Hütter and Karl Bartos designed the record sleeve. A more detailed account can be found in Aktivität 6.

The band never or only rarely give interviews to the press.

On the contrary, Kraftwerk have benefited from worldwide, extensive press coverage generated by interviews, primarily with the bands appointed spokesman Ralf Hütter. Granted, in their earliest days there was little press coverage of Kraftwerk but since 1975 at least Kraftwerk have always given interviews to the media whenever they have a new release out. In addition, Ralf Hütter has also been interviewed by numerous radio stations and tapes of such interviews are in circulation amongst collectors. However, there have been no new interviews with Ralf since 1992 – similarly, however, there have been no new releases to promote!

They did live or playback appearances in the following German TV shows:

- Popstop 1982 (it was in fact only a video)
- Dreiklangdimensionen (in was in fact only a video)
- Hitparade 1978 (it never took place)

The band are working on a follow up album to 'The Mix', called 'The Mix 2' which will contain more re-recorded versions of old songs.

There have been many rumours and rumoured release dates of such an album, but Kraftwerk themselves have never said there would be such a release, replying, when questioned, that it may be a possibility "in a few years time" (NME, 1991).

In addition to officially released German, English, French and Japanese language versions of 'Pocket Calculator' there are also Spanish and Polish language recordings in existence.

Not quite. The band have recorded and released English, German, Japanese and French versions of the song. In addition, they also recorded a version in Italian and mimed to it for some Italian TV shows in 1981. When the band perform live they regularly change some of the lyrics into the local language. So, the band have performed 'Pocket Calculator' with some of the lyrics in Spanish, but there is no recorded release as such, excluding live bootlegs. Little is known of Kraftwerk's Polish concert appearances, so it is not known if there is a Polish language version.

The band sold the rights of the 'Autobahn' LP for \$2000 to their US record company.

No, it was the rights to their first LP, 'Kraftwerk' and it was in fact to their German record company, Philips, in 1970, not their US record company. From the 1975 article 'Germany's Kraftwerk: Metal of the Road' is this extract: '...Kraftwerk's contract with Phonogram (the parent company of Philips/Vertigo/Mercury etc. - IAC) ran out several months ago and is presently being renegotiated ... Hütter and Schneider don't intend to make the same kind of deal they did back in 1971, when they sold the entire rights to 'Kraftwerk', the first of their three European albums, to Philips Records (a phonogram subsidiary) for \$2000.' From the US magazine Billboard, 22.3.75, there is also this note: 'The story goes that Phonogram's German A&R director bought their tape master without hearing it when told the asking price was only \$2000.' ■

Small Ads

FOR SALE: Tribal Gathering 1997' live photos - set of 60, available for swap. Please write for full swap list with a list of your swap items to; Dave Woodward,

Wanted: WANTED: Kraftwerk: 7": Autobahn (USA, 5:46" edit), Homecomputer (Brazilian), Robots/Spacelab/Model/Neonlights(Argentinian), Tour de France (MEX); 12": Trans Metal Express (US 5'42" edit), TEE (UK Promo, KLANGDJ-101); LP: The Mix (Colombian, 1 LP), Man Machine (Canadian white label); orig. promo video tapes: everything. Harmonia: De Luxe (7"). M. Rother: Lichtermeer (7"). A. Bambara: Planet Rock (2-trk promo CD). Rheingold: FanFanFanatic (12", engl. vers.). Ibloss: Supernova (LP). Var. Art.: Video: Spirits of Germany, Herzschrittmacher 2; CD: DJ's Best, Cool Groove non stop blast mix I; LP: Super Group Festival I. Klaus Zaepke, (e-mail:)

Wanted: Kraftwerk press articles (worldwide, photocopies or cuttings), radio interviews, videos, live tapes, photos. Everything is of interest! I'll buy or swap (large selection available for swaps). Klaus Zaepke, (e-mail:)

OUTRO

Aktivität amid the great scheme of things...

Previously mentioned in 'Update' sheet number 7, Aktivität 10 will prove to be the final issue of the fanzine, for the foreseeable future at any rate. As it will complete the three-issue subscription set-up introduced in 1996, it is a tidy ending to wrap up the fanzine with this issue. (NB: For those readers whose subscription is extended further, a refund of monies due will follow after the final 'Update' sheet is mailed). The fanzine first appeared in January of 1992, with no plans other than seeing how issue 1 fared. That it has continued for well over 10 issues (as in addition to the 10 regular issues there have been numerous 'specials' over the years too) is not something that I would have ever imagined in the early days. This is principally due to the contribution of fellow fans and readers — if you contrast issue 1 with the later issues and 'Update' sheets, there is a world of difference in both the amount and quality of information contained within the fanzine. Were it not for the readers of the fanzine, Aktivität would be nothing at all like you find it now.

Earlier issues of the fanzine contained some text from myself, as 'editor'/'spokesperson' if you will, forming the 'Intro' to each issue of the fanzine, though in recent issues I've tended to let the fanzine speak for itself and reserve space for other information. For this final issue however it seems appropriate that this Outro be a vehicle to answer many questions that recent correspondence has raised.

Aktivität has at times survived despite itself. There has never been any official involvement from the current members of Kraftwerk nor their record companies and Aktivität has always made it quite clear that it is an unofficial venture. Until such

times as Kraftwerk ever decide to set-up some similar service (which, if we're realistic, is never), there will always be a demand for information from unofficial sources.

Over the years I've sometimes found it rather ironic that the fanzine should often be seen as a prime source of information on the band, considering how little official contact there has ever been. On the grapevine, it has been intimated that Kraftwerk themselves do not like the fanzine and that they categorise it along with bootleg recordings and the like. It is disheartening on a personal level, considering the effort that is put into the fanzine by both readers and myself, that this is seen as being similar to bootlegs (which, in many cases, can be put together by similarly Kraftwerk-obsessed enthusiasts, but more often than not by individuals who see their product as nothing more than fodder for making money — it makes no difference whether the CD is by Pink Floyd, Kraftwerk or Nirvana, it's not fan-motivated sentiments at work for them). However, it comes as no surprise considering the way that Kraftwerk work and has really not had much of an adverse effect since it became known (before issue 4, in fact) — since the prime motivation behind the fanzine is simply that it has been written for consumption by fans, not for the band themselves.

Ex-members have been more open towards the fanzine and Aktivität has been fortunate enough in printing interviews and the like from various contributors. I feel in retrospect that more could have been made of these links had the liaison with various individuals been somewhat more even-handed — but to some extent the 'unofficial' nature of the fanzine has been something of a bonus in allowing valid criticism to go unobscured by rose-tinted sycophantic praise, which often blights 'official' ventures. Even so, to me personally it often seems that the fanzine could have been enhanced a lot from greater liaison with ex-members and the like — at

one point in the fanzines history it seemed very likely to be the case, but this did not turn out favourably for the fanzine, at least. Oh well...

So, why is the fanzine coming to an end anyway, I hear you ask... Particularly as Kraftwerk appear to be gearing up for their most intense Activity since 1991 – isn't it all rather ironic?! Why don't I just carry on with it?

Well, principally the reasons are personal ones. Aktivität has been a rather time-consuming activity (pun intended!) over the years, but mainly over the last year things have gotten crazy – as can be seen by the fact that issue 9 ended up appearing months later than originally intended and there have been embarrassing delays in answering correspondence at times. Basically, it's very difficult to keep on top of so many things – life in general, you might say – to the extent that I have often felt that it is doing a disservice to the readers at times. So, it is time for a rest from the fanzine for me and time to concentrate on other matters that the alarm bells have been ringing for attention on for some time now, coupled with a relocation on the work front.

Another factor is that information on the band is less and less paper-based and more and more Internet-based – at the fanzines inception it was just so difficult to come by the information that was needed – but nowadays with the proliferation of Web sites and the like, the information is free and far easier to locate. I'd like to think that in the great scheme of things Aktivität has served a useful purpose in illuminating many areas of Kraftwerk's activity and history to many more people. There have been a great many mistakes in articles within the fanzine, which is the danger of trying to work with no official involvement – sadly, Kraftwerk themselves have never seemed concerned with thoughts of accurately documenting their history via the media – the closest yet has been Pascal Bussy's biography

on the band, which met with resistance and counter-claims from the band on its original and subsequent release(s). Like Bussy's book, Aktivität is part of the resistance!

So, where does that leave the humble reader if there is to be no more Aktivität? Where shall the information be found? Well, I'd point out that the Internet is already the main source, since the vast amount of Kraftwerk resources available as web sites, discussion lists and chat areas give far more information than could ever be crammed into a hundred issues or more of the fanzine. It does mean you have to be online though, but it's the way ahead, for sure.

While there is no hard and fast documented survey data to back up these findings, it strikes me as being the case that the average Aktivität reader profile is someone in their late-20s/early 30s, interested in both their own music-making activities as well as Kraftwerk, busy and in work and interested in information on Kraftwerk which they may not necessarily have the time nor contacts/resources to track down by themselves. Which is where I hope that Aktivität has helped, in being able to deliver the required information (at least some of the time) in regular chunks. Basically, the fanzine has made it easy to get information on the band, certainly in comparison to the state of play at the turn of the 90s. It's something I've mentioned in the early publicity sheets for the fanzine that the fanzine was born out of the frustration that there was nothing of its kind existing to cover Kraftwerk – or at least what fanzines had been produced were somewhat lacking in answering the questions that many wished to know about.

This idea of having access to a 'digest', if you will, is something that I as an individual feel when I look for information on other bands – it can be difficult for someone to find the time to wade through the investigation work, or simply that one doesn't quite know where to begin nor know of anyone who

can help — or perhaps it's just that we're all becoming more and more impatient! My feeling is that relatively easy access to useful, detailed information should be the goal. I just hope that Aktivität has been a reasonable example of this.

The future will hopefully see information from Aktivität available on the Web — there are already examples of this available in fact — but what I wish to do in the near future is finish pages that I have been working on for a while now — but they shall only be available online when it is convenient to update them — it's pretty crucial to their success that they be current and valid, not outdated and inaccurate.

Music whether it be by Kraftwerk or any other act, has the ability to affect individuals very deeply — it may sound contentious, but I have always believed that someone who may only like one particular Kraftwerk record is just as much a fan as someone who has countless permutations of every release from every corner of the globe. It doesn't matter whether you like every drop of Kraftwerk or not, so long as what you do like means something very much to you. And in reading the correspondence to the fanzine it cannot but fail to become apparent just how much the music of Kraftwerk can mean to people — somewhat ironic considering the general media impression that is often given of how Kraftwerk's music is but a shallow, cold, emotionless affair. It is far from so.

If Aktivität has been of some service to individuals from every range of the above spectrum in detailing information of whatever aspect of Kraftwerk and their music appeals to them, then it has been in its own way a success despite the many setbacks and obstacles that have been in the way over the years. It's particularly ironic to realise now though that Kraftwerk have not released a single new record in all the years (six — count 'em!) that the fanzine has been going — it would be a nice to see a new record finally emerge this year as the fanzine closes!

I'd like to thank all the fanzine readers for continued support and to those individuals who have contributed to the fanzine over the years and who have made it what it is now, whether their contribution has been large or small — it all counts in the great scheme of things...
IAC, April 1998

Please note: The final Update sheet (number 8) should appear in June or July, detailing Kraftwerk's concerts this coming summer — unless there is more urgent news beforehand, such as a record release.

There may be some delay in answering any correspondence as I will no longer be living at the current Aktivität address from mid-April onwards. ■

ITALIA 1990

I M A G E S

The two photographs featured on the back cover of this issue have been supplied by Emilio Giaretta and are from the 1990 'secret' Italian tour. The top photograph shows clearly three quarters of the short lived Kraftwerk line-up featuring both Karl Bartos and Fritz Hilpert (pictured left to right within the photo are Bartos, Hilpert and Florian Schneider). Note that for this tour Kraftwerk were still using the same (or similar) video screens to those dating from the 1981 world tour and not those that were used from 1991 onwards. The bottom photograph features Ralf Hütter in action during 'Pocket Calculator' — and to his left, off stage but behind an additional Kling Klang module, two of Kraftwerk's technicians. Note also how the video screen displays one of the 'Pocket Calculator' sleeve illustrations, Ralf in this case. Another photograph from this same set shows clearly a similar drawing for Fritz Hilpert, which was most likely drawn especially for these live performances. ■

